

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE INTERFACE STRATEGIC BOARD

25TH November 2021 AT 2PM, HELD ONLINE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

PRESENT:

Professor Andrea Nolan (Chair), Professor Donald MacRae, Dr Siobhán Jordan, Dr. Liz Rattray, Professor Russel Griggs, Jim Watson, Dr Stuart Fancey, Brian Brown, Stuart Bain, Graham Watson, Dr Eve Bird, Dr Martin Hawley, and Louisa Macdonell.

IN ATTENDANCE:

John MacKenzie (HIE), Gary Bannon (SFC), Shelley Breckenridge, Nicola Brooks, Lorraine Thomson, and Laura Goodfellow (Interface).

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed the Board, in particular; Dr. Liz Rattray (LR), Dr. Martin Hawley (MH), Louisa Macdonell (LM), Dr. Eve Bird (EB) and Graham Watson (GW) who were attending their first meeting.

Dr Siobhán Jordan (SJ) updated the Board on progress to secure a representative from Scotland's Colleges to replace Liz Connolly and informed them that it was the intention to have someone in place by the February 2022 meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

The Chair noted apologies from the following: Gillian Galloway, Marc Crothall and Dr. George Baxter.

3. ORAL UPDATES

Professor Andrea Nolan (AN) updated the Board on the recent announcement that Dr Siobhán Jordan (SJ), Founding Director will be leaving Interface in mid-February 2022. Andrea noted the progress with the recruitment of a new Director and the intention to appoint an interim Director during the transition period. Board members paid testimony to Siobhán's contribution to the establishment, growth and strategic development of Interface.

AN noted the potential Innovation strategy being developed by Scottish Government / Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board. The Board also noted the pending publication of an ambitious 10 year National Strategy to drive Scotland's economic transformation.

SJ then provided the following updates to the Board:

- The team were actively engaged in COP26 activities, events and engagements during November 2021. They are fully committed to supporting companies who are advancing net zero and social inclusion aims.
- AN and SJ had an informative meeting with Minister for Higher Education and Further Education, Youth Employment and Training, Jamie Hepburn in September 2021. Arrangements are being made for him to meet selected business and academic teams in 2022 by way of example of knowledge exchange in action.
- The Interface Annual review has been released and was well received.
- The team remain very busy and were bolstered by the '*Adopt a Business*' initiative being shortlisted as a finalist at the Praxis Unico Knowledge Exchange awards.
- The Scottish Knowledge Exchange Awards take place on the 17th March 2022 and we are grateful for the contribution by Board members to participate on the judging panels.

8. INTERFACE ENGAGEMENT WITH COLLEGES [ORAL UPDATE]

SJ introduced the discussion noting the limited resource within Interface to engage with Colleges and within Colleges to engage with businesses to support innovation led challenges. SF noted the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) recent recommendations for enhanced support to Colleges to enable greater engagement outlined in the report on coherent provision.

8. PROGRESSING RECOMMENDATIONS OF SFC'S REVIEW OF COHERENT PROVISION AND SUSTAINABILITY WITH INTERFACE STRATEGIC BOARD [PAPER 5]

Board members welcomed Paper 5 which provided an update on the Scottish Government response to the SFC [Phase 3 Final Report](#) review of Coherent provision. SF noted that the delivery of the many and varied review recommendations will take place over a lengthy period and within the context of joined up approaches across Scotland and the UK.

A consultation was currently underway with respect to the [Research Excellence Grant and Research Postgraduate Grant](#) and a separate consultation on Knowledge exchange and innovation was scheduled to be launched in the coming weeks. GB noted the opportunity for Board members to collectively contribute their suggestions and ambition for Interface by way of response to the consultation. RG noted that South of Scotland Enterprise are participating on a pilot pathfinder for regional tertiary education in partnership with SFC.

ACTIONS: Engage with Karen Jackson, SOSE to understand the pathfinder pilot project being undertaken in South of Scotland in collaboration with SFC SB

9. INTERFACE RISK REGISTER NOVEMBER 2021 [PAPER 6]

The Board noted the updates to the risk register in the last 12 months and the ongoing reviews by the senior management team within Interface. DMR highlighted the risk of cyber security and was assured by the extensive mitigation measures in place.

10. INTERFACE - PHYSICAL OFFICE UPDATE [PAPER 7]

This paper was presented to the Board for information in preparation for a further discussion at the August 2022 meeting.

11. AOB

The Chair noted the follow up discussion with Board members on recruitment of the new Director.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair closed the meeting after reminding the Board that the date of the next online meeting is **22nd February 2022 2pm – 4pm.**